



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Theme: "Writing Women Back into History"

The Department of Veterans Affairs joins with the nation to observe Women's History Month in March by recognizing and honoring women Veterans.

"Since the Revolutionary War, America's women have earned America's gratitude and respect for their contributions to the military and to the nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K Shinseki. "VA will continue to improve our benefits and services for women Veterans as we transform into a 21st century organization."

VA's Center for Women Veterans partnered with the National Foundation of Women's Legislators to encourage recognition of women Veterans through a "Her Story" campaign. With a March 11 kick-off, VA facilities will be encouraged to recognize and honor employees who are women Veterans.

Projects benefitting women Veterans also figure into the Department's priority for using special funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. For example,

- In Fayetteville, N.C., VA is upgrading the Women's Clinic to modernize the women's pavilion into a patient-centered environment;
- In Bath, N.Y., VA is renovating the Women's Health Center to accommodate a women's health clinic; and
- Portland, Ore., VA is creating a new women's clinic in the existing Primary Care Clinic.

Women Veterans are being encouraged to tell their stories through oral history to the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial (<http://www.womensmemorial.org/index.html>) and the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project (<http://www.loc.gov/vets/>).

Women Veterans are eligible for the same benefits as male Veterans. VA's women Veterans health care program managers are pursuing initiatives to enhance women's health care with an overall focus on:

- Comprehensive primary health care
- Women's health education
- Reproductive health
- Communications and partnerships, and
- Women's health research.

In 2009, the Department initiated a national plan for comprehensive primary care for women at all facilities. VA also finished hiring 144 full-time women Veterans program managers. More than \$199 million was budgeted in 2010 for gender-specific health care for women Veterans. In addition, VA awarded the "Create Women's Clinic" project using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Under this project, an existing clinic will be remodeled in 2010 and serve as model for other clinics across the country.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. They comprise 7.5 percent of the total Veteran population and nearly 5.9 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population by 2020 and 9.5 percent of VA patients.

"During this observance of Women's History Month, let's remember the special contributions and sacrifices of the ever-increasing number of women serving in the armed forces," said Assistant Secretary L. Tammy Duckworth. She noted women currently make up approximately 14 percent of the active-duty military and 17 percent of Guard and Reserves.

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: www.va.gov/womenvet and www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth.

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